DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 676 PS 018 861

AUTHOR Hewes, Dorothy W.
TITLE American Froebelians and Their Understanding of Comenius.
PUB DATE 23 Aug 90
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (12th, Prague, Czechoslovakia, August 23, 1990).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational History; *Educational Theories; *Kindergarten; North American History; Primary Education
IDENTIFIERS Comenius (Johann Amos); *Froebel (Freidrich); *Philosophical Influences

ABSTRACT

An extensive survey was made of personal papers, textbooks, periodicals, and other printed material from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the early years of the twentieth, when the kindergarten movement rose and declined, to answer several questions concerning American Froebelians' cognizance of the influence of Comenius on Friedrich Froebel. Were founders and supporters of the American kindergarten aware of the writings of Comenius? Did they recognize similarities between his philosophy and that of Frobel? Did Americans leading the Kindergarten Crusade know that Froebel had been influenced by Comenius? If so, did they then acknowledge the indebtedness of the nineteenth century father of the kindergarten to the work of the seventeenth century Moravian scholar? How did their recognition of the relationship between the two systems, or their avoidance of this recognition, affect the kindergarten movement? Findings indicated that the American Froebelians could have been aware of the "central core of thought" which was shared by Comenius and Froebel. It is concluded that an educational system based upon one individual and dependent upon didactic materials, becomes vulnerable, static, and cannot adapt to new challenges and unique problems. Use of the historical approach to integrate new theories into a central core of thought can provide an integraton of systems to stand the test of time. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED320676

AMERICAN FROEBELIANS AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF COMENIUS
LES FROEBELIANS AMERICAINS ET LEUR COMPREHENSION DE COMENIUS
DER VERSTAND ÜBER KOMENSKY DER AMERICANISCHEN FRÖBELIER

Dorothy W. Hewes, Ph.D.
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA USA 92182-0282

Twentieth century historians acknowledge the influence of Jan Amos Comenius (Komensky) on American education. They recognize that he advocated free and compulsory education for all children, of both sexes, that he recognized the importance of sensory education, that he advocated instruction in the language of the home, and that he viewed the years before six as a vitally important part of the educational process. Modern historians have also documented the role of philosopher Carl Christian Krause in introducing Friedrich Froebel to the works of Comenius in 1828, and have traced many aspects of the kindergarten system to this encounter.

This study deals with American Froebelians and their cognizance of Comenius during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, when kindergartens became popular, and the early years of the twentieth century, when other educational philosophies predominated. Cognizance is defined as acknowledgement of something which has entered into awareness or perception. An extensive survey was made of personal papers, widely distributed textbooks, kindergarten periodicals, and other printed materials for the period under investigation. The goal was to find answers to several questions. Were founders and supporters of the American kindergarten aware of the writings of Comenius? Was there recognition of the similarities between his philosophy and that of Froebel? Did Americans leading the Kindergarten Crusade know that Froebel had been influenced by Comenius when formulating his system? If so, did they then acknowledge the indebtedness of the nineteenth century father of the kindergarten to the work of the seventeenth century Moravian scholar? How did their recognition of the relationship between the two systems, or their avoidance of this recognition, affect the kindergarten movement? And, of course, what lessons can historians learn from what transpired during this era?

PS 018861

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Dorothy W. Hewes
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Comenius and American Education

The greatest influence of Comenius on American education was during the early colonial period. In a previous paper (Hewes, 1989), much of the contemporary structure and philosophy of education in the United States was attributed to English Puritans who began to colonize near present-day Boston in 1620. Puritan theologians apparently relied heavily upon his writings, particularly Ratio ordinis et disciplinae, in establishing their Congregational Church.Their establishment of Latin schools and of tax-supported non-denominational public elementary schools for all boys and girls was based upon the writings of Comenius, as was the founding of Harvard College in 1636.

In addition, Harvard alumnus Cotton Mather wrote in 1702 that its presidency had been offered to "that brave old man, Johannes Amos Commenius, the fame of whose worth hath been trumpetted as far as more than three languages (whereof everyone is indebted unto his Janus) could carry it." The proposal apparently was made in person by the son of the Massachusetts governor during the 1641/42 winter of uncertainty while Comenius was trying to establish an international academy in England. Mather noted with regret that the solicitations of the Swedish ambassador diverted him another way. (Odlozilik, 1942. p 22-24) Spinka says that Comenius made his decision because his wife "abjured him with tears that he should not take her, unacquainted with the foreign language, so far away from the company of the exiles." (1943, p 77) Monroe, in an 1896 sketch of the influence of Comenious, questioned Mather's story, and it is unlikely that the American Froebelians of the late nineteenth century knew about it since it is not mentioned in an offical two volume history of Harvard published in 1840. However, this history describes Harvard's early years with terms like "acute pecuniary embarassments," which might indicate that Comenious was wise to decline the offer. (Quincy, 1840)

Janua, designed by Comenious to teach Latin through parallel understanding of language and meaning, was not only one of the first library acquisitions at Harvard College but continued to be used throughout the seventeenth century as a standard textbook for the Latin schools and colleges. English editions of Orbis Pictus, his picture book for children, were also popular until they were replaced by the similarly illustrated New England Primer about 1700; demand for educational materials not originating in England led to its first American printing in 1810. Other writings of Comenius were also widely read and discussed during this period. However, by the time Froebel's writings were translated in the 1870s, these policies had been adopted for public schools across the nation and their origins forgotten.

The Period of the Kindergarten Crusade

Were American Froebelians cognizant of the direct relationship the writings of Comenius had on the development of the Froebelian kindergarten? Although references to Comenius were included in history texts published during the mid-1800s, during this survey of literature I found nothing in educational history texts published during the 1870s and 1880s that indicated his direct relationship to American education, no recognition of similarities between his methodology and philosophy and those of Froebel, and no account of his influence upon Froebel. However, several kindergarten sources did mention an 1828 visit of Froebel to Carl Christian Krause (1781-1832), at which time he was introduced to the works of Comenius. Krause, whose philosophical orientation was similar to that of Froebel, advocated a union (Bund) of all mankind to attain universal development, and he created an all-in-God pantheistic doctrine. There are also indirect relationships between Krause and Froebel. For example, Sidonie Krause, daughter of the philosopher and fiance of his student Leonhardi, studied with Froebel at Burgdorf.

American writings until the 1890s do not appear to have concerned themselves with the origins of Froebel's concepts. They occasionally gave credit to Pestalozzi, Silesian mystic Jacob Boehme, or the romantic poet Norvallis, for ideas which Froebel then improved upon. Many simply implied that the kindergarten had a sort of immaculate conception or that it "burst upon him." In the 1870s, information about the kindergarten was primarily through pamphlets written in German. The Child and Child-Nature by the Baroness Marenholtz-Buelow, describing Froebel's ideas as he had explained them to her, was also available in translation after 1868. The Baroness recognized that others had expressed thoughts similar to those of Froebel, but stated that "A fresh genius was needed to add new material to the old." (p 10) She called Rosseau "the first pioneer of modern educational theories" and viewed Pestalozzi as having carried on Rousseau's ideas, but made no mention of Comenius or of Krause even though she must have known about their influence on Froebel. (p 77)

Beginning in 1855, subscribers to Barnard's American Journal of Education were able to read reviews and translations of European publications such as an article on "Object Teaching" by F. Busse, from Diesterweg's 1873 Wegweisser, which credited Comenius with being the "spirited father of the so-called object teaching as a special discipline" and asserted that his deep secret was "the running parallel of the simultaneous learning of things and words.". Barnard also published papers from the 1880 International Congress of Education at Brussels, including "Intuition and Intuitive Methods" by Sluys which stated

that "Comenius was the true creator of *intuitive teaching* . . . . All the pedagogues since Comenius, and almost all the philosophers who have written upon education, have demonstrated that it is necessary to begin it by that of the senses, and have protested against the abuse of verbalism and abstraction in early education." These, and other articles placing Froebel within a long succession of educators, were republished in Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers in 1881. One of the first articles about Comenius in a modern American periodical was an adaptation of K. G. von Raumer's biographical sketch which appeared in Barnard's journal in 1858. (Odlozilik, 1942, p 27) Barnard also published the first widely distributed article about the Froebel kindergarten in 1854 and he continued throughout the remainder of the century to emphasize the basic philosophical aspects of education rather than the materials for direct application.

In addition to Barnard's journal, publications from England such as the 1887 re-issue of Orbis Pictus and Benham's 1858 translation of The School of Infancy were readily available. Instead of recognizing the value of Comenius and other philosophers, kindergarten training school pupils and philanthropic supporters of the kindergartens appear to have been exposed to inspirational messages that at times almost equated Froebel's educational principles with the Ten Commandments that Moses brought down from the Mount carved on stone. Elizabeth Peabody, tireless leader of the Kindergarten Crusade from the mid-1860s on into the 1880s, told aspiring teachers that they must "humbly look up to the innocent soul" of the child, which "in turn sees nothing but the face of the Father in Heaven." This required that the true kindergartner's first characteristic must be "Faith, which can be based only on the abiding conviction that God is with us 'to will and to do' if we will only have the courage to take for granted that *if we are willing*, he will make of us divine guides to others." (Peabody, 1886. p 14-15)

Froebel and his fellow teachers were usually presented as having worked in isolation to develop an entirely new education based upon prescribed sequential use of the balls, blocks, and other equipment and activities. From its 1869 first edition, The Paradise of Childhood emphasized Froebel's sequenced "gifts" and "occupations," which not coincidentally were improved upon, manufactured, and sold by publisher Milton Bradley. (Weibé, 1921) An 1871 text by Adolf Douai, designed to train kindergartners to manage very large classes through rote use of "the science and art formulated by Froebel," was similarly published by E. Steiger, Bradley's chief competitor. The translation by Peabody's sister Mary of The Reminiscences of Friedrich Froebel by the Baroness von Marenholz- Bülow, gave this typical account:

> In Keilhau, Froebel could only make experiments in order to get necessary data for the working out of his educational idea. The idea itself was grasped by him at first only in the germ, and was still unripe, as well as the means of its accomplishment. In the process of fermentation towards a new form in which Froebel found himself, he could not, in full measure, fulfil all the duties of the practical teacher any more than could Pestalozzi or others of his predecessors." (1877, pp 12-13)

Women trained by Peabody and the other enthusiasts who extolled the miracles of the kindergarten through Froebel's Gifts and Occupations were rarely sophisticated enough to read and analyze philosophical publications. Their major concern was the correct application of a didactic kindergarten system to classroom teaching. In contrast were those who had been educated in central Europe, with Matilda Kriege an example. Her 1876 "biographical sketch" of Froebel, based upon the German writings of Wichard Lange, A. B. Hanschmann, and the Baroness Marenholtz von Bülow, was widely circulated. Although she included the period Froebel spent with Pestalozzi at Yverdun, she said that the idea of the kindergarten first came to him while at the Orphan Asylum of Burgdorf. While there, in January of 1836, he wrote "a highly philosophical, poetical, and prophetic paper in which the influence of the philosopher Krause can be traced " At about this time, she said, Froebel also became acquainted with an enthusiastic pupil of Krause, Hermann von Leonhardi from the University of Prague.

Another notable exception was William Hailmann, Swiss-educated author of many books and countless articles during the entire period under investigation, who consistently presented Froebel as just one in a long succession of educators. His 1874 History of Pedagogy showed the lineage of Froebelian philosophy which he continued to teach until his death in 1920. In 1883, he wrote that:

> It is one of the great glories of Froebel's name that his truth is aforeshadowed, that his coming is heralded, as it were, by all great thinkers on educational matters from Plato down to Comenius, Rousseau, and Pestalozzi. Rousseau asserts the individuality of man and bases all education upon it; Pestalozzi teaches that for education, individuality is a growth, and illustrates this in intellectual education; Froebel vindicates for this growth universality, all-sided life; and shows that this individuality is of no value unless it 'lives in free unity with mankind, with nature, with the universe, with God.' Do you not see the chain? Be, Grow, Live ! (p 185)

1890s Recognition of Comenius

By the 1890s, a majority of those who had initiated the kindergarten crusade were aged, dead, or had become involved with other interests. For complex social and economic reasons, the kindergartens began to move from private or philanthropic to public school sponsorship. Teacher training was in normal schools or colleges where Froebelian concepts were incorporated into a wider overall approach to elementary education. Psychological and statistical concepts were being introduced and scientific approaches to pedagogy were being developed. (Hewes, 1990) By the 1890s, the "professionalism" of teaching led to new texts like Baldwin's Elementary Psychology and Education. Emphasis was less upon practical experience and more on didactic methods. In a typical text for normal school and college classes, Seeley (1899) devoted about six pages each to superficial sketches of Comenius and Froebel, with no hint of similarities or transmission of concepts across the years. This book surveyed essentials of Chinese Confucianism, importance of the Crusades, writings of the Talmud, benefits of Benedictine monastaries, and other educational systems from around the globe, all organised into isolated segments with no discussion of relationships or the transmission of ideas.

Some textbooks on the history and philosophy of education still tended to view Froebel as an isolated dreamer. Meiklejohn's popular New Education said that "From the year of 1816 his educational work ran in one course, according to one idea, which gradually became more and more clear to himself. . . . In the year 1837 – at the not immature age of 55 – he had come into the full possession of his central thought, and he was worrying his mind for a fit name to give the institution he was about to found." (Meiklejohn, 1896, p 25) Still others continued to suggest divine guidance, as in Herford's 1896 American edition of The Student's Froebel which says that Froebel was "led as by the pointing of God's finger" into his occupation. (p xiv)

A few educational historians writing about kindergarten origins or teaching educational history courses in normal schools began to write about Froebel's friendship with philosopher Karl Krause. In 1822, Froebel's two articles in Isis, a noted scientific journal edited by Lorenz Oken. They were countered by a published response from Krause. This was followed by correspondence and by Froebel's 1828 visit with Krause at Göttingen. That visit, and conversations with Krause and his colleagues, introduced Froebel to Comenius and to his treatise on early education of children, Schola Materni Gremii. This influenced Froebel's establishment of a department for children aged 3 to 6 at his Burgdorf training school about 1835 and was the basis of his first kindergarten at Blankenberg in 1836. Bowen's 1893 book on Froebel and Education Through Self-

Activity described the political scene in Prussia that led to the decline of the Froebel's Institute at Keilhau and considered the visit to Krause as being important because it not only drew attention to the writings of Comenius but it provided better perspective on the problems being encountered. And Hanschmann went so far as to state that "Krause looked upon Froebel as the educational successor of Pestalozzi and Comenius." (Franks, 1897, p 109)

Denton Snider, an American Hegalian involved with the St. Louis public kindergartens, wrote a detailed but critical account of the relationship between Froebel and Carl Krause. Snider believed that Krause might have left behind a great school of philosophy based upon his theistic view of the world if he had gotten a desired appointment in Berlin instead of Hegal. He attributed more influence to Krause and his associates than to the ideas Froebel gleaned directly from Comenius. He quoted an "eye witness" description of Froebel at a gathering at the home of Krause's friends, the Frankenbergs, describing his out-of-date clothing and lack of a necktie, and saying that:

> Friend and foe agree in point at least upon Froebel, that he was the possessor of preternatural homeliness. A long, pointed, somewhat curved nose, whose hook would crook over the more with his smile; enormous ears spreading out on each side of his head like a cabbage-leaf; low forehead, small eyes, his physiognomy is declared by one observer to resemble that of a Hindoo.
>
> When he opened his mouth and began to talk, it was easy to see that his speech was not elegant, but uncombed, even brusque; then it would fly off in a fit of ecstasy to regions where few if any could follow. He had a peculiar vocabulary not known to the Professors at Gottingen; it was derived from what he had heard at Jena nearly thirty years before. . . .All this was coupled with no small display of self-conceit --- surely a fantastic appearance at Gottingen. (Snider, 1900, p. 239-40)

An important landmark, and the perhaps the reason this visit to Krause became noteworthy to Froebelians, was the celebration in 1892 of the 300th birthday of Comenius. His contributions were recognized at several meetings and in lauditory publications. The National Educational Association devoted a section of its annual conference to papers celebrating the event. Most dealt in flattering generalities. The Herbartian president of Teachers College, Nicholas Murray Butler, recognized that there had been little interest in Comenius during the 18th and 19th centuries and compared its revival to a river that had disappeared into a sandy desert and then reappeared at a distant point. His talk dealt directly with the transmission of the "robust and practical character of the proposals of

Comenius" and his awareness that the human mind was an organism, not a mere sheet of wax. "Locke's thought was of the education of the gentleman," said Butler, "Comenius proclaimed that education was for the race. Pestalozzi's insistence that education is development, a drawing-out and not a putting-in, merely repeats the thought on which all the work of Comenius is based. Fröbel, also, had Comenius as the seed-thought for his system." He concluded by emphasizing that "it doesn't detract from Froebel's teachings to say that in almost every important particular they were built upon the foundations laid by the Moravian bishop" since this had grown a new education. (Butler, 1892. pp 723-728) Although the NEA session was attended almost exclusively by men who were school superintendents or on college faculties, the Proceedings carried the papers to all members of the association, including those belonging to the Kindergarten Department, and Butler's presentation was published as a small book that same year.

Throughout this period, there remained a variety of approaches to the kindergarten origins. In its1896 edition, the bibliographic chapter of The Paradise of Childhood gives several conflicting (and somewhat inaccurate) origins of Froebel's system. One is that "The germ of the kindergarten idea came to him with the prattling speech of babyhood and to perfect it was the labor of the rest of his days." Another is that when Froebel and his wife went to Keilhau in 1837 "the idea of the kindergarten burst upon him." Thirdly, the "peculiar circumstances" of Froebel's friendship with "the celebrated philosopher Carl Krause" are described in some detail. (Weibé. 1921)

In the spirit of constructive criticism, some progressive kindergarten supporters openly discussed other origins of Froebel's ideas. Wiggin and Smith wrote that ""Froebel cannot be said to have discovered a new fact, or even propounded a new theory, when he hailed women as the true ministers of the great work of reformation which he undertook." (1896 p 2) They debated whether Froebel's mediation of contrasts had been based upon Shelling's system of Identities, but concluded that he had only recognized a universal truth. They do not mention Comenius, although Rousseau and Pestalozzi are discussed. Others who investigated Froebel's sources during this decade included Bowan, who pointed out that Froebel's Education of Man had opened with almost the exact words used by Sir Thomas Browne in Religio Medici and that other ideas were expressed in phrases earlier written by Carlyle. (1893. pp 44-45) Fanny Franks, editing Hanschmann's writings in 1897, pointed out that Froebel's motto of "Come let us live for our children" had been adapted from Goethe's motto. And James Hughes expressed the idea that one of Froebel's most important discoveries was the need for harmony between one's receptive, reflective and executive powers, and said that:

> He improved upon the motto of Comenius, 'Children learn to do by doing.' To Froebel growth was always greater than learning . . . so as he interpreted the motto of Comenius it gained increased significance and became, 'Children *grow* by doing.' . . .Nearly three hundred years ago Comenius announced as one of the great aims of educational progress: 'To search out and discover a rule in accordance with which teachers teach less and learners learn more.' We are still striving toward the idea of Comenius. (1898. pp 68, 74)

Some devotees of the Froebel system continued into the 1890s to view it as having been his original and unique idea. At a meeting of the Kindergarten Department of the National Educational Association, for example, one speaker proclaimed that this "knowledge of child-life" came to "the great founder of the system" almost as Divine revelation to bring children into conscious connection with the Creator. (Starrett, 1890. p 554) Among those who disagreed was Hailmann, who asserted to the the NEA five years later that "We in the kindergarten have gotten entirely rid of Froebel. We don't call ourselves Froebelian any more. We are followers of the kindergarten idea. Men die and women die, but the principles live forever." He then supported his statement with a quotation from Froebel himself, "Personal following separates and principles alone unite. Follow the principles I have indicated, but not me." (1895, p 546-7)

In 1897, when Fanny Franks translated Hanschmann's Kindergarten System for publication in England and the United States, she reflected a waning of the mystical aura surrounding Froebel with her suggestion that he had embodied the spirit of his time, riding the crest of the new wave moving towards a new natural science and a new psychology. She implied that the times were changing and recognized a historical sequence, stating:

> Comenius, in his *Panegersia*, had insisted that the child should be educated from the cradle; Bacon, the real father of the Pestalozzi and Froebel schools, had shown the need for a thorough training of the senses as the gateway into the mind; Rousseau had eloquently preached the doctrine of nature; but no one had come so close to the little child as Froebel. (p xv)

By 1898, even devout Froebelian Susan Blow felt obliged to devote the introductory chapter of The Mottoes and Commentaries of Friedrich Froebel's Mother Play to "Froebel's Philosophy." She analyzed Immanuel Kant, Coleridge, Oken, Schelling, Mother Goose, and other sources of wisdom, but gave greatest credit to Froebel's observations of "simple mother wit" and to what he saw in hearts of children. She used a different approach in 1913, when the Report by the Committee of Nineteen attempted to clarify the Froebelian system for members of the International Kindergarten Union. A

section of the report that Blow authored explains that Froebel's conception of *Gliedganzes* embodied a "final truth which may be dialectically demonstrated," but said that it had not originated with him but had been "mystically divined by the Christian consciousness" and that "the everlasting foundations of philosophy had been laid when Aristotle announced his insight into the self-moved." The Committee did not give Krause credit for orienting Froebel, but instead stated that "The phrase genetic-developing method occurs for the first time in educational literature in Froebel's letter to Krause written in 1828" and that the concept had been included in The Education of Man, published in 1826. (IKU, 1913)

The period in which Froebel's contribution was looked at in more perspective paralleled the rise of a modified Herbartian system that had already been adopted by the elementary schools. In the early 1890s, they began efforts to also dominate the kindergartens. One of their earliest presentations to the National Educational Association was an 1892 address by Fred McMurry, one of the Herbartians occupying newly established posts in the college schools of education that stressed scientific pedagogy and relegated kindergarten training schools to second class status. Typically, he ignored Froebel when he announced that:

> There are few men who have given to the world a complete educational doctrine. Pestalozzi has not done it, nor Rousseau, nor Joseph Payne, nor Quick, nor Fitch. Comenious and Herbert Spencer have approached the mere outlines of one; the Herbartians alone have developed such a system in detail.

With the professionalization of teacher education by Herbartians and others, writings about Froebel became less frequent and more pragmatic. (Hewes, 1990) This was reflected in the long-delayed publication of a protest by Wichard Lange, who had been the first person after Froebel's death to try to organize the mass of materials he had left behind. Such a statement would have seemed out of place when it was first written on April 21, 1862, but it fit well into the spirit of the 1890s. Lange had written:

> In regard to my remarks on the letter to Krause, I will here confess to the votaries of Friederich Froebel that I do not consider it right that the shady side of this remarkable, indeed this great man, should be carefully covered up by his friends. I think we should honor the truth here as elsewhere, and that by such uprightness we injure neither the man, who could as little be an angel in human form as other men, nor his cause, which will stand, so far as it has emanated from God, the source of all truth. We are much more likely to obtain a favorable judgement from all thoughtful and quietly investigating men, who are not inclined or accustomed to throw away the true metal with the schlag, by

such considerate uprightness. On this ground I shall never fear to speak freely of the human imperfections of a man who has done and brought into use so much good. (Barnard, 1890, p 19)

By the late 1890s, the developmental psychologists – a new professional group devoted to scientific child study, with almost entirely male membership – could follow the lead of G. Stanley Hall in ridiculing traditional kindergartens. The last devastating criticism of Froebel came in 1916, when William Kilpatrick wrote Froebel's Kindergarten Principles Critically Examined, a best selling book which appears to have been part of a campaign to build his role as "The Million Dollar Professor" at Teachers College in New York, the core site for Herbartian teacher education. It ignored Comenius but used words like "bizarre" and "the limits of mystic crudulity" to describe orthodox kindergarten beliefs. It was a masterful piece of work, with a bit of diasarming levity in the preface:

> Mr. Quick, discussing Froebel in his *Educational Reformers*, has said with a charming frankness, "Where I can understand him, he seems to me singularly wise, but at times he goes entirely out of sight, and whether the words we hear are the expression of deep truth or have absolutely no meaning at all, I for my part am at times totally unable to determine. (p v)

Lessons from the Froebelians

Jean Piaget, introducing a book to commemorate the third centenary of the publication of Opera Didactica Omnia, wrote that "Either Comenius can have no immediate interest for us at the present time or his interest for us depends on that central core of thought which is to be found in any system and which it should be possible to express in the form of a few simple ideas." Piaget pointed out that the "supreme merit" of Comenius was that he raised a series of new problems, that "Theories may pass away, but problems endure." (Unesco, 1975. p11, 31)

This survey indicates that the American Froebelians could have been cognizant of the "central core of thought" which was shared by Comenius and Froebel. Critics found it easier to criticize the kindergarten when quotations out of context were used to demonstrate the mystical symbolism of a rather odd individual, while pointing out that those elements deserving to stay in the mainstream had been known since the days of the ancient classical writers. Yet we face a paradox. Without the charismatic aura of Froebelian godliness and genius that was exploited by the women of the Kindergarten Crusade who proselytized on its behalf, the kindergarten would not have swept from the Atlantic to the Pacific in the 1880s. Not only would the United States have even less early childhood education than it

has today, but the elementary and secondary schools would be more rigidly organized and more devoted to didactic academic subjects. On the other hand, the decline of the Froebelian movement can be attributed to this diefication of Froebel.

Searching for the clues about the awareness of Comenius during the period of expansion and decline of the Froebelian kindergarten reinforced a question Busse asked more than a century ago. He described the way Comenius "strode forward a sovereign and with all the power and burning zeal of a reformer,"but asked, "Why were those battles on the field of pedagogy necessary? Why must a Franke, a Rousseau, a Basedow, a Pestalozzi, a Diesterweg, a Froebel come, if, as Jean Paul said in his *Levana*, 'merely to repeat that a hundred times which is a hundred times forgotten?'" One reason, according to Busse, was that this sort of education cannot satisfy those who based their judgement upon the progress of children in reading, writing, and arithmetic. He also found that it was difficult to find the skillful, practical, and experienced men and women needed to teach these classes. And he recognized that the exciting materials adapted to child minds led to an independence which might be criticized, noting that object teaching could be viewed as "only an hour of babble." (Barnard, 1890. p 417)

Froebel appears to have correctly analyzed the situation when he tried to avoid having the kindergarten identified with his name. William Hailmann, at the first meeting of the Friends of Froebel in 1881, admonished against "foolish exaggerations and extravagant claims of the overenthusiastic friends who have done much to injure our cause" and declared that "one of the chief glories of Froebel is that he built on the work of others. During more than a half century he advocated for "The New Education" and struggled against the problems that came from personifying an educational movement. In answering the question of "What lessons can we learn from what transpired during this era?" it seems apparent that an educational system based upon one individual, particularly if it is dependent upon didactic materials, becomes vulnerable. It is static, and cannot adapt to new challenges. Use of the historical approach, integrating new theories as applications to a strong central core of philosophical belief, can provide an integration of systems to stand the tests of time. Without this, educators will continue the cycle of repeating and forgetting which Busse spoke about a hundred years ago.

REFERENCES

Baldwin, Joseph. Elementary Psychology and Education. New York: D. Appleton, 1887

Barnard, Henry. Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers: Papers on Froebel's Kindergarten. Hartford: American Journal of Education, 1890 reprint of 1881

Blow, Susan. Mottoes and Commentaries of Froebel's Mother Play. New York: D. Appleton, 1898

Bowen, H. Courthope. Froebel and Education by Self-Activity. New York: Scribner's, 1893

Busse, F. "Object teaching - Principles and methods" from Diesterweg's *Wegweisser* (1873) in Barnard, Kindergarten and Child Culture Papers. Hartford: American Journal of Education, 1890

Butler, Nicholas Murray. The Place of Comenius. Syracuse, NY: C. W. Bardeen, 1892

Butler, Nicholas Murray. "The place of Comenius in the history of education" in Proceedings of the National Education Association, 1892, pp. 723-728

Douai, Adolf. The Kindergarten. New York: E. Steiger, 1871

Downs, Robert B. (1978). Friedrich Froebel. Boston: Twayne, 1978

Eller, Ernest M. (Ed.) The School of Infancy. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956

Franks, Fanny (translator and editor) of A. B. Hanschmann, The Kindergarten System: Its Origin and Development. Syracuse, New York: C. W. Bardeen, 1897.

Hailmann, William N. "Bearings on Froebel's work" in Education: An International Magazine, Vol 10 (September 1882-July 1883), pp 183-185

Hailmann, William N. History of Pedagogy. New York: American Book Co., 1874

Heinemann, Arnold H. Froebel's Letters. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1893

Herford, William H. Student's Froebel, Adapted from Die Erziehung der Menschheit. Boston: Heath, 1896

Hewes, Dorothy. Entrance Age to Public Education in the United States. Paper presented at ISCHE, Oslo, 1989. ERIC Document ED 315 166.

Hewes, Dorothy. "Historical foundations of early childhood teacher training" in Yearbook in Early Childhood Teacher Education, Vol I, New York: Teachers College Press, 1990

Hughes, James L. Froebel's Educational Laws for All Teachers. New York: D. Appleton, 1898

International Kindergarten Union. The Kindergarten: Reports of the Committee of Nineteen on the Theory and Practice of the Kindergarten. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913

Kilpatrick, William H. Froebel's Kindergarten Principles Critically Examined. New York: Macmillan, 1916

Kriege, Matilde H. Friedrich Froebel - A Biographical Sketch. New York: E. Steiger, 1876

Mann, Mary (translator and editor). Reminiscences of Friedrich Froebel by Baroness B. von Marenholz-Bülow. Boston: Lee and Shephard. 1897

Marenholtz-Buelow, Bertha M. von. The Child and Child Nature, Syracuse, N.Y.: 1889

McMurray, Fred. "Herbartian Pedagogy" in Journal of Proceedings and Addresses. National Educational Association, 1892, pp 421-33

Meiklejohn, J. M. D. The New Education. (2nd edition) Syracuse, NY: C. W. Bardeen, 1896

Monroe, Will S. Comenius' School of Infancy - An Essay on the Education of Youth During the First Six Years. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1896

Odlozilik, Otakar. Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius) Chicago: Czechoslovak National Council, 1942

Peabody, Elizabeth. Lectures on the Nursery and Kindergarten. Philadelphia: N. H. McKinney, 1874

Quincy, Josiah. The History of Harvard University. Cambridge, MA: John Owen, 1840

Seeley, Levi. History of Education. New York, American Book Co., 1899

Snider, Denton J. The Life of Frederick Froebel. Chicago: Sigma. 1900

Spinka, Matthew. John Amos Comenius - That Incomparable Moravian, New York: Russell & Russell, 1967 reissue of 1943

Starrett, Helen E. "The Kindergarten work and mission" in Journal of Proceedings and Addresses. National Educational Association, 1890

Unesco. John Amos Comenius - 1592-1670. Paris: United Nations, 1957

Weibé, Edward (editor). Paradise of Childhood. Springfield, MA: Milton Bradley Co. 1921 reprint of 1896

Wiggin, Kate D. and N. A. Smith. The Republic of Childhood. Vol. III. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1896

Presented at International Standing Conference for
the History of Education (ISCHE XII)
Prague, Czechoslovakia, August 23, 1990